

# **APPENDIX F**

## **REGION ACCEPTANCE PROCESS**

### **FOR INTEGRATED REGIONAL WATER MANAGEMENT**

March 2011

#### ***Purpose***

This document constitutes the Region Acceptance Process (RAP) used by the Department of Water Resources (DWR) to evaluate and accept an Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) region into the IRWM Grant Program, pursuant to California Water Code (CWC) §10541(f). This document is intended to provide detail on the RAP, which is referenced in DWR's IRWM Grant Program Guidelines authorized under Proposition 84. The IRWM Program Guidelines were adopted by DWR in August 2010. The RAP as presented in this document was finalized and adopted by DWR after a public review and comment period and is Appendix F of the Program Guidelines. Acceptance of the IRWM region into the IRWM Grant Program via the RAP is required before the region can submit an application for funding.

This document puts forth the procedures for accepting IRWM regions into the grant program. These procedures are based on the first iteration of the RAP, which was completed in fall 2009. These procedures are applicable to new regions wishing to apply for acceptance into the IRWM grant program, or to existing regions that received conditional approval previously or have made significant modifications to the region that necessitate reevaluation of the region by DWR.

DWR will conduct future RAP evaluations in advance of any upcoming IRWM grant solicitation cycles in order to provide an opportunity to those regions that have not been accepted into the IRWM Grant Program or that have addressed any prior conditional approval requirements. Events that may cause a region to have their previously approved region acceptance status suspended by DWR include but are not limited to: changes in the regional boundary, loss or addition of signatory agencies of the Regional Water Management Group (RWMG), continued and prolonged inactivity, inability to self sustain IRWM efforts, changes in statutory requirements, or changes in state water management policy. DWR will evaluate any above-listed changes on a case-by-case-basis and will make a suitable determination of the region acceptance status. In the event that DWR suspends a region's acceptance status, DWR will provide the RWMG with written notice of their suspension and the basis for that suspension.

#### ***Integrated Regional Water Management***

An IRWM region is not based solely on geographic considerations or characteristics. It is also defined by water management issues, its stakeholders, and water-related conflicts. An IRWM region must be designed or configured to diversify and strengthen the regional water management portfolio.

While there is no quantitative definition of a region (such as a minimum number of acres), it is possible to define the region too narrowly in terms of geography, participants, water resources, water management strategies, and water management objectives. A narrowly defined region would limit opportunities to integrate water management strategies or diversify a region's water management portfolio.

The RWMG must consider the broad variety of the water systems being managed in the planning area, and consider issues related to:

- Water supply
- Water quality
- Environmental stewardship
- Flood management
- Drought preparedness
- Wastewater treatment
- Watershed management
- Recycled water
- Groundwater management
- Land use
- Natural habitat and conservation
- Conjunctive use
- Reduced dependence on imported water

Important to the formation of a functional and successful region is membership composed of numerous, diverse stakeholders that manage, direct, or influence regional water management.

### ***Desirable Characteristics of an IRWM Region***

The following are some of the characteristics considered by DWR to be compatible with IRWM goals:

- The IRWM region is the largest defined contiguous geographic area encompassing the service areas of multiple local agencies, and it is defined to maximize opportunities to integrate water management activities related to natural and man-made water system(s), including water supply reliability, water quality, environmental stewardship, and flood management.
- The IRWM region is inclusive and utilizes a collaborative, multi-stakeholder process that provides mechanisms to assist disadvantaged communities (DACs); addresses water management issues; and promotes integrated, multi-benefit, regional solutions that incorporate environmental stewardship toward the development and implementation of the IRWM plan.
- The IRWM region encompasses water management system(s) containing natural and man-made components, considers watersheds, and identifies and prioritizes regional water-related projects through collaborative efforts to meet multiple water resource needs.
- The IRWM region should demonstrate a reasonable and effective governance structure for developing and implementing its IRWM Plan.

### ***Undesirable Characteristics of an IRWM Region***

The following are some of the characteristics considered by DWR to be incompatible with IRWM goals:

- Multiple IRWM regions in the same geographic area are all planning to manage the same water system.
- The region is solely defined by a jurisdictional boundary, county line, other geopolitical boundary, and does not account for watershed delineations.
- The region is formed for the sole purpose of seeking short-term grant funds rather than to sustain a long-term regional planning effort to ensure water supply reliability, water quality, environmental stewardship, and flood management.
- The region is project driven where existing projects are the primary focus and collaborative, integrated regional planning and management is secondary.
- The region boundaries tend to exclude rather than include other water management entities and stakeholders.

### ***Who Should Submit?***

An entity representing an IRWM region that meets one of the following conditions should submit RAP materials on behalf of the proposed IRWM region:

- Has not already been granted region acceptance
- Is currently conditionally accepted and seeking full acceptance status
- Has made significant modifications to the region's characteristics that necessitate reevaluation of the region

The entity submitting RAP materials on behalf of the RWMG must have been granted specific consent by the RWMG.

Acceptance of a region through the RAP process is necessary for IRWM regions that anticipate applying for DWR's IRWM grant funding component programs which include:

- Proposition 84 IRWM Planning or Implementation funds
- Proposition 1E Stormwater Flood Management funds
- Other IRWM funds that may be available in the future

### ***What to Submit***

The RWMG shall submit RAP materials in the form of written text, maps, figures, and tables that demonstrate that the IRWM region is the most comprehensive, contiguous area defined by common water management issues related to the water system(s), both natural and man-made, including water supply, water quality, environmental stewardship, and flood management.

DWR understands that some regions may be in the initial developmental process and other regions may have more fully developed IRWM planning efforts. A developing IRWM region and an established region may have differing abilities to provide information about their IRWM region. In such cases as appropriate, the developing region may only be able to provide a conceptual discussion and limited supporting information regarding the composition of the IRWM region. The RAP materials must provide the information necessary to justify and support the proposed region boundary. The RAP materials should thoroughly support the basis for the proposed region boundary. The information submitted should be clear and succinctly written. Please do not submit non-essential information. Table 1 describes

the specific information a RWMG must submit for the RAP. Corresponding evaluation criteria is provided to clarify how the submitted material will be assessed.

If the IRWM region was conditionally accepted in a previous RAP and is submitting information in a subsequent RAP to remove the condition, the entity submitting RAP materials should contact DWR before preparing the RAP submittal. In such cases a full RAP submittal may not be necessary.

***Table 1 – Submittal Materials and Reviewer Information***

| WHAT TO SUBMIT   | EVALUATION CRITERIA   |
|--|---|
| <p><b><u>Submitting Entity:</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Contact information (name, address, phone, fax, and email) of the person with whom DWR should coordinate.</li> <li>2. Information on the submitting entity including why the RWMG has selected the entity to submit the RAP materials.</li> </ol>  | <p>Ensure that contact information was provided. Is it clear that the submitting agency has been given permission to submit on behalf of the RWMG?</p>  |
| <p><b><u>RWMG Composition:</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. A description of the composition of the RWMG. Identify RWMG members, including their statutory authority over water supply or water management, their role in the IRWM effort, regional water management responsibilities, and the level of IRWM participation. For each entity, state whether they have adopted, plan to adopt, or will not adopt the IRWM Plan. For the purposes of this document “statutory authority over water supply or water management” may include, but is not limited to, water supply, water quality management, wastewater treatment, flood management/control, or storm water management.</li> <li>4. A description of the difference between RWMG members and stakeholders in terms of development, participation, decision making, and adoption of the IRWM Plan.</li> </ol> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have all the RWMG members indicated that they have adopted or plan to adopt the completed IRWM plan?</li> <li>• Does the RWMG consist of at least 3 agencies with at least 2 local agencies within the regional boundary having statutory authority over water supply, water quality, water management, or flood protection?</li> <li>• Is there diversity in the water management responsibilities of the RWMG members?</li> <li>• For entities that are not currently participating in the IRWM effort, are any of these not adequately represented by other RWMG members or stakeholders holding similar water management interests?</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b><u>Stakeholder Inclusiveness:</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. A listing of the stakeholders participating in the IRWM Plan including each stakeholder’s tie to water management within the IRWM region.</li> <li>6. Describe the procedures, processes, or structures that promote access to information and collaboration among people or agencies, including DACs and Native American Tribes (Tribes), with diverse water management views within the region.</li> <li>7. A listing of agencies or entities that are not currently participating in the IRWM efforts but could possibly in the future. Also list each of these agencies’ or entities’ ties to water management within the IRWM region.</li> </ol>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the submitted material demonstrate a diverse range of stakeholders including DACs and Tribes and other interests in water management and use?</li> <li>• Are stakeholders, including Tribes and DACs, given an opportunity to participate?</li> <li>• Does it appear that the IRWM region is inclusive and utilizes a collaborative, multi-stakeholder process that provides mechanisms to assist and involve DACs in addressing water management issues?</li> <li>• Do the RWMG members and stakeholders have access to and exchange information on water management issues?</li> <li>• Are processes and procedures in place that outreach to and allow participation by those entities currently not participating?</li> </ul> |

| WHAT TO SUBMIT   | EVALUATION CRITERIA   |
|--|---|
| <p><b><u>Public Involvement:</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. A description of the process being used that makes the public both aware of and part of IRWM efforts.</li> <li>9. Discuss ways for the public to gain access to the RWMG and IRWM Plan for information and how the public is allowed to provide input.</li> <li>10. Discuss how the RWMG evaluates and responds to public input.</li> </ol>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the RWMG allow the public to participate in regular meetings?</li> <li>• Is there an established method of making meeting agendas, notices, and minutes accessible?</li> <li>• Are the items above posted with sufficient lead time for the public to participate in meetings?</li> <li>• Is it clear who the public should contact within the RWMG if they have questions regarding regional water management efforts or IRWM planning and implementation in the region?</li> <li>• Are there public meetings held to solicit public comments ahead of major decisions to be made by the RWMG?</li> <li>• What is the process for the public to provide input to the RWMG on regional water management and on the IRWM Plan?</li> <li>• What is the process being used by the RWMG to evaluate and respond to public input?</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b><u>Governance:</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11. Describe the RWMG governance structure and how it will facilitate the sustained development of regional water management and the IRWM process, both now and beyond the state grant IRWM funding programs.</li> <li>12. Describe how decisions are made. Identify the steps by which the RWMG arrives at decisions and how RWMG members and stakeholders participate in the decision-making process. Examples of RWMG decisions to consider in the discussion include:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Establishing IRWM Plan goals and objectives</li> <li>b. Prioritizing projects</li> <li>c. Financing RWMG and IRWM Plan activities</li> <li>d. Implementing plan activities</li> <li>e. Making future revisions to the IRWM Plan</li> </ol> </li> <li>13. Describe how the RWMG will incorporate new members into the governance structure. Explain the manner in which a balance of interested persons or entities representing different sectors and interests have been or will be engaged in the process, regardless of their ability to contribute financially to the plan.</li> <li>14. Describe any conflict resolution processes and any known existing conflicts regarding water management in the region.</li> <li>15. Explain how the governance structure results in an IRWM planning effort that is inclusive and utilizes a collaborative, multi-stakeholder process that provides mechanisms to assist DACs; addresses water management issues; and promotes integrated, multi-benefit, regional solutions that incorporate environmental stewardship toward the development and implementation of the IRWM Plan.</li> </ol> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is it clear how decisions are made, including establishing plan goals and objectives, prioritizing projects, financing RWMG activities, implementing plan activities, and making future revisions to the IRWM Plan?</li> <li>• Who participates in the decision making process?</li> <li>• Are all of the RWMG members involved or are there designated committees?</li> <li>• Does the governance structure allow only certain RWMG members to vote on decisions?</li> <li>• Does the decision making process allow for the participation of stakeholders and smaller entities?</li> <li>• Can stakeholders influence RWMG decisions?</li> <li>• Do members have to contribute financially to the RWMG to be allowed a voice?</li> <li>• Can the RWMG governance structure facilitate the sustained development of the IRWM region now and beyond the current IRWM funding programs?</li> <li>• Do conflict resolution processes exist in the governance structure?</li> <li>• Will the processes and procedures as described result in the promotion of integrated, multi-benefit, regional solutions that incorporate environmental stewardship toward development and implementation of the IRWM Plan?</li> <li>• Did the RWMG demonstrate a reasonable and effective governance structure for development and implementation of the IRWM Plan?</li> </ul> |

| WHAT TO SUBMIT  | EVALUATION CRITERIA  |
|---|--|
| <p><b><u>Region:</u></b></p> <p>16. Present the features that dictate and describe how the IRWM regional boundary was determined, such as:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Political/jurisdictional boundaries</li> <li>Groundwater basins as defined in DWR Bulletin 118, Update 2003 – California’s Groundwater</li> <li>Watersheds</li> <li>RWQCB boundaries</li> <li>Physical, topographical, geographical, and biological features</li> <li>Surface water bodies</li> <li>Major water-related infrastructure</li> </ol> <p>17. Explain how the IRWM region encompasses the service areas of multiple local agencies and will maximize opportunities to integrate water management activities related to natural and man-made water systems, including water supply reliability, water quality, environmental stewardship, and flood management.</p> <p>18. Please include a map of the IRWM boundary.</p> <p>19. Please include a GIS shape file on CD showing the IRWM region boundary. The GIS file must be NAD83, UTM 10 or UTM11.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does it appear that the IRWM region boundary was based solely on jurisdictional boundaries?</li> <li>Is the basis and rationale clear for the IRWM region boundary?</li> <li>Does the region make sense for long-term water management? How?</li> <li>Does the IRWM region boundary consider multiple water management boundaries such as watersheds and groundwater basins?</li> <li>Does the IRWM region encompass the service areas of multiple local agencies?</li> <li>Does it appear that the IRWM region is structured: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To maximize opportunities to integrate water management activities related to natural and man-made water systems, including water supply reliability, water quality, environmental stewardship, and flood management?</li> <li>Such that the water management portfolio in the region is strengthened and diversified?</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
| <p><b><u>Water Management History:</u></b></p> <p>20. Describe the history of IRWM efforts in the region.</p> <p>21. Describe the regional water management issues and any water-related conflicts in the region. Include a discussion of any progress towards resolution of any water-related conflicts. Issues and conflicts may relate to water supply, water rights, water quality, flood management, environmental stewardship, imported water, waste water, conjunctive use, etc.</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is the history of the IRWM efforts in the region discussed?</li> <li>Are the water management issues and water-related conflicts presented clearly?</li> <li>If applicable, how has water conflict been managed in the region?</li> <li>Does the region boundary appear appropriate given the context of the region’s unique water management issues?</li> <li>Do the listed stakeholders (See Stakeholder Inclusiveness, above) provide a balanced representation of the water issues in the region?</li> </ul>  |

| WHAT TO SUBMIT   | EVALUATION CRITERIA   |
|--|---|
| <p><b><u>Inter-regional Coordination:</u></b></p> <p>22. A description of the IRWM region’s relationship and coordination with adjacent IRWM regions.</p> <p>23. Identify any overlapping areas and explain the basis for the overlap. Discuss whether there is a clear relationship and acknowledgement by both regions that the overlap is acceptable.</p> <p>24. Describe any areas within the IRWM region boundary that are excluded or create a void area with adjacent IRWM regions and explain why this is reasonable and appropriate.</p> <p>25. Describe any distinct water management differences between adjacent or overlapping IRWM regions that support being separate IRWM regions.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has the RWMG successfully managed overlaps or gaps within and outside of the region boundary?</li> <li>• If there are overlapping IRWM regions, is there a clearly defined relationship between the IRWM planning efforts?</li> <li>• Are there indications that the overlapping regions have discussed and will continue to discuss their water management issues and coordinate on activities occurring in overlapping areas?</li> <li>• If there are inter-regional water management issues across adjacent IRWM regions, is there a clearly defined relationship between the IRWM planning efforts?</li> <li>• Are there indications that the adjacent regions have committed to a process to address their inter-regional water management issues and coordinate on interrelated water management activities?</li> <li>• Does the submittal describe any areas within the region that are excluded or create a void area, and if so, explain why this is reasonable and appropriate?</li> <li>• Has the boundary been drawn such that the region leaves uncovered areas immediately outside the boundary?</li> <li>• Based on the justification for the region boundary, the water management issues, and coordination with adjacent areas, does the proposed region represent the largest defined contiguous geographic area that maximizes opportunities to integrate water management activities related to natural and man-made water systems?</li> </ul> |

## ***IRWM RAP Review Steps***

### ***Step 1 – Submission of RAP material***

RWMG submits materials to DWR, as described in “What to Submit” column of Table 1.

### ***Step 2 – DWR reviews RAP material***

DWR reviews the RAP material using evaluation criteria from Table 2, and makes one of the following determinations:

1. **Application not accepted.** The information presented does not support the concepts and basis for the proposed IRWM region, including the region boundary and governance structure of the RWMG. The RWMGs in this category will not be invited to the RAP interview. Following this review, DWR will identify for the applicant the reasons why the application does not support the basis for the IRWM region.
2. **Application potentially accepted.** DWR will schedule an initial applicant interview with the RWMG. DWR will prepare a list of questions or discussion points to clarify the questionnaire responses. An email with the questions/discussion points will be sent to the point-of-contact



indicated in the RAP materials submitted by the RWMG (Table 1). The email will also provide the date, time, and location of the interview.

### ***Step 3 – Interviews***

The RWMG will have an opportunity to discuss the RAP material with DWR representatives during a scheduled interview. The RWMG may wish to prepare a presentation in response to the questions and discussion points sent previously by DWR. DWR will have an opportunity to ask questions and seek clarification. The purpose of the interview is to provide DWR with answers to questions raised during the review process. Representatives of the State Water Resources Control Board, the appropriate Regional Water Quality Control Board, or other interested state agencies may participate in the interviews. The applicant will be informed of the number of representatives to participate in the RAP interview. RWMGs will be expected to limit their presentation to approximately one hour.

During the interview, the RWMG may be requested to submit additional information to DWR. This additional information may be considered by DWR before making draft region acceptance status recommendations for a region. At the time of the interview, the RWMG will be instructed to submit any additional information to DWR by a specified date.

### ***Step 4 – Decision Process***

DWR will consider the RAP materials and information discussed during the interview process. DWR will post draft region acceptance status recommendations for the regions evaluated during the RAP cycle. The draft recommendations will be posted on the website listed below.

An email announcement will be issued via IRWM's email distribution list. If an RWMG representative is not already on the IRWM contact list and wishes to subscribe, the representative may request to be added by sending an email with contact information to: [DWR\\_IRWM@water.ca.gov](mailto:DWR_IRWM@water.ca.gov).

Before making a final decision, DWR will provide a public comment period, which includes at least one public meeting to consider public comments. Based on the draft region acceptance recommendations, public comments received, and consultation with reviewers, DWR's Director will make one of the following determinations:

1. **Region Not Accepted.** The information provided in the RAP materials and the interview does not reasonably support the concepts and basis for one or more of the following: the IRWM region boundary, governance structure, or inclusion of stakeholders.
2. **Region Accepted.** The information provided in the RAP materials and the interview reasonably supports the IRWM region boundary, governance structure, and inclusion of stakeholders.
3. **Region Conditionally Accepted.** In some regions where information on the exact region boundaries is not complete (or accepted by DWR), and/or where the governance structure and stakeholder involvement functions of a region are not well understood, DWR may issue conditional region acceptance.
4. **Other Action.** DWR may make other recommendations as necessary to address specific concerns with an individual IRWM region or a group of IRWM regions.

DWR's final RAP decisions will be posted on the IRWM website, along with an updated map of IRWM regions, and emailed to the IRWM distribution list.

If the region is not accepted or conditionally accepted into the grant program, then DWR will notify the RWMG of the reason(s) for non-acceptance or the reason(s) for not granting full acceptance and the



limitation to its participation in the grant program. The RWMG will need to work with its stakeholders and resubmit, as part of a future RAP cycle, updated RAP materials that demonstrate that the RWMG has addressed the conditional acceptance items, if it wishes to participate in the grant program.

If the region is granted conditional acceptance, it will only need to submit those materials during the next RAP that address all of the reasons for the conditional acceptance; it will not be required to resubmit previously submitted materials that have otherwise not changed since the previous RAP. In this case, the applicant should provide affirmation that no other significant changes have occurred in the region and that the current application materials supplements the previous application.

### ***Timeline***

The schedule for each RAP Cycle will be posted on the IRWM website listed below.

### ***How to Submit***

Applicants are to submit four (4) hardcopies and one (1) CD/DVD copy of the of the complete RAP application to DWR. Following are the addresses for mailing the RAP application by U.S. mail, overnight courier, or hand delivery. All applications materials should be submitted to the attention of Rolf Frankenbach.

By U.S. Mail:

California Department of Water Resources  
Division of Integrated Regional Water Management  
Financial Assistance Branch  
Post Office Box 942836  
Sacramento, CA 94236-0001

Or overnight courier to:

California Department of Water Resources  
Division of Integrated Regional Water Management  
Financial Assistance Branch  
1416 9th Street, Room 338  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Or hand-deliver to:

901 P Street, Lobby  
Sacramento, CA 95814

### ***IRWM Grant Program Website***

DWR will use the internet to notify interested parties of the status of this proposal process and to convey pertinent information. Information will be posted on DWR's IRWM homepage:

<http://www.water.ca.gov/irwm/>

### ***Point of Contact:***

For questions about the RAP guidelines, please contact Rolf Frankenbach at (916) 651-9265, or via email at [rfranken@water.ca.gov](mailto:rfranken@water.ca.gov).